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INTRODUCTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the millennium year 2000, our Court overcame significant obstacles in achieving our mission in the administration of justice and emerged with the most effective performance in its history. Through expanded use of automation and procedural improvements, our Court continued to focus on enhancing customer service and increasing operational efficiencies in spite of a significant reduction in its personnel budget.

Central District's Case Processing Performance Continues to Excel

Bankruptcy Program Indicators published by the Administrative Office place the Central District of California bankruptcy court in the top 10% in 8 of the 16 performance measures indicative of operational effectiveness. The Court also exceeded the national average in 15 of these measures. Overall, the Court ranked second in the nation for all bankruptcy courts and first for large bankruptcy courts. [See page 37]

Staffing Restructuring/Reduction Completed

As part of a decreased FY01 budget, the Court put into place a staffing reduction plan, the first in its history. The Plan was designed to minimize the impact on operations and customer service while providing separated staff with career transition assistance. [See page 24]

Court Provides Substantial Assistance to Pro Se Debtors

Pro Bono programs coordinated by the Court and local bar associations continued to serve an increasing number of *pro se* debtors. During the year, over 800 debtors were provided with assistance in understanding their rights prior to reaffirmation agreement hearings, and more than 1,500 debtors were offered assistance in dischargeability matters. With the commencement of *pro bono* programs in the Northern and Riverside divisions, all divisions now offer *pro bono* programs. [See page 10]

Sheri Bluebond Selected as Bankruptcy Judge

During 2000, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals proceeded to fill the bankruptcy judgeship vacated by the Honorable Lisa Hill Fenning. Ms. Sheri Bluebond was selected to fill the judgeship in September 2000, and was officially sworn in on February 1, 2001. [See page 8]

Six Bankruptcy Judges Reappointed

During the year, six bankruptcy judges for the Central District of California were reappointed to 14-year terms by the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. The judges who were reappointed were the Honorable Geraldine Mund, Chief Judge; the Honorable James N. Barr; the Honorable Samuel L. Bufford; the Honorable David N. Naugle; the Honorable Barry Russell; and the Honorable John E. Ryan. [See page 8]

Quality Control Automation Introduced

Developed by the Clerk's Office, an automated program for the quality control of new petition data was introduced. This program standardizes and streamlines the manual quality control process for new petitions that had been in place in all divisions. The new reporting features of the program enable management to quickly identify training needs and other important trends. [See page 28]

Bankruptcy Filings Decline for a Second Year

Declining to less than 100,000 bankruptcy filings for the first time since 1995, a total of 79,901 bankruptcy cases were filed in the Central District of California during 2000. This represents a 21.3% decline from the 101,471 cases filed in 1999 and a 33.5% decrease from the record 120,063 cases filed in 1998. Bankruptcy filings declined in all chapters except chapter 11. [See page 47]

Pending Caseload Reduced to Lowest Level Since 1983

During 2000, the Court reduced the number of pending bankruptcy cases to the lowest level since 1983. As of December 31, 2000, the Court's pending caseload had been reduced to 43,517 bankruptcy cases, 16% less than the 51,741 cases pending at the end of 1999. [See page 39]

Court Continues to Introduce Automation and Software Enhancements

In an ongoing effort to save labor and improve data accuracy, the Clerk's Office enhanced its automation infrastructure, including the automatic closure of dismissed and discharged cases. [See page 32]

Local Bankruptcy Rules Revised

The Court's Local Bankruptcy Rules were revised during the year and became effective on January 2, 2001. The revised Local Bankruptcy Rules are available on the Court's web site. [See page 10]

• Use of Video Conference Hearing Technology Expands

Judge Robin L. Riblet became the fourth judge in the district to use video conference hearing technology on a routine basis to hear intra-district bankruptcy cases. Video conference hearing technology also enabled several Ninth Circuit bankruptcy judges to assist the Court by hearing a number of matters without the need for travel. [See page 33]

Court Introduces Document Imaging Performance Measures

Building upon existing performance measures, the Clerk's Office added performance measures to track the time it takes for staff to image a document for the online case file system. The use of performance measures has resulted in a dramatic increase in the processing speed of documents filed with the Court. [See page 41]

Images of Orders for Appeals Regularly Forwarded from District Court

To improve the efficiency with which appeals to the District Court are handled, the District Court began forwarding electronic images of dispositive orders to the Clerk's Office. Electronic routing is more reliable than inter-office mail and also substantially reduces the time it takes to deliver the orders to the appropriate parties in the Bankruptcy Court. [See page 40]

• webPACER Usage Reaches Record/Billing Module Introduced

Strong public acceptance of the Court's online case files resulted in record webPACER usage. The Clerk's Office also introduced a webPACER billing enhancement that enables users to easily identify billable minutes by client. [See page 17]

• Judicial Workload Equalization Program Completed

Assisting the Court since 1996, the Judicial Workload Equalization Program drew to a close in 2000. Under the program, a total of 700 adversary proceedings from the Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley and Riverside divisions were assigned to bankruptcy judges within the Ninth Circuit. [See page 14]

• Participants Continue Accolades for the Court's Mediation Program

Participants continue to report high levels of satisfaction with the Court's Mediation Program, believed to be the largest of its type in the nation. This program provides a model for implementing other successful programs. [See page 12]

Court's Web Site Upgraded

The Clerk's Office completed a major redesign of the Court's web site to make it easier for users to access information. [See page 15]

- FAS₄T Automated Financial System Implemented After Extensive Preparation
 After six months of preparation, the Court went "live" with the Financial Accounting
 System for Tomorrow (FAS₄T) software, which reduced the processing time for the
 Court's accounts payable and budget transactions. [See page 33]
- Court Continues to Operate Effectively During Democratic National Convention
 The Court took steps to continue service while supporting the City's efforts to reduce traffic congestion in the downtown Los Angeles area during the Democratic National Convention. A server connection to the Santa Ana Division enabled Los Angeles Intake staff to operate while in Santa Ana. Additionally, the Court took advantage of the opportunity and accelerated shipment of over 172,000 closed cases to the National Archives and Records Administration. [See page 23]

MISSION OF THE COURT

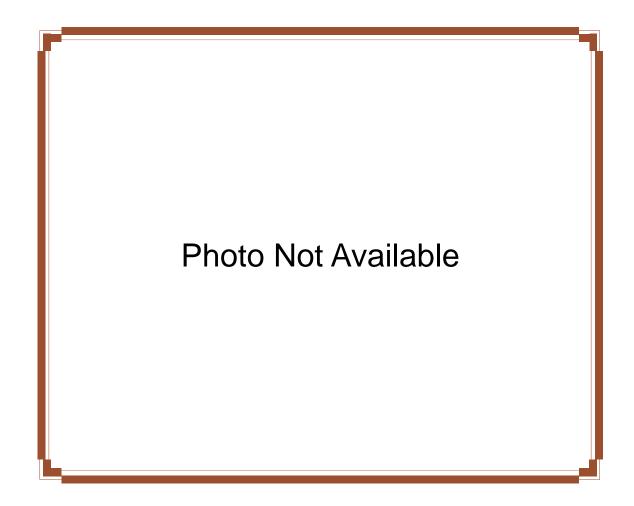
The mission of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California is to serve the public by:

- Resolving matters referred to the Court in a just, efficient, and timely manner
- Supplying prompt and accurate information
- Responding fairly and courteously to the needs of the entire community
- Providing leadership in the administration of justice in the bankruptcy system

In fulfilling our mission, the Court recognizes the importance of:

- Demonstrating respect for the dramatic impact that bankruptcy has on the lives of our customers
- Instilling confidence in the competence, impartiality, and ethics of the entire Court

THE BANKRUPTCY JUDGES OF THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA



Top row (from left):

Alan M. Ahart, Arthur M. Greenwald, Ernest M. Robles, David N. Naugle, John E. Ryan, Vincent P. Zurzolo

Center row (from left):

Barry Russell, Mitchel R. Goldberg, Robert W. Alberts, Lynne Riddle, Kathleen March, Thomas B. Donovan, Samuel L. Bufford, James N. Barr

Front row (from left):

Meredith A. Jury, Ellen Carroll, Erithe A. Smith, Geraldine Mund (Chief Judge), Robin L. Riblet, Lisa Hill Fenning (Retired), Kathleen T. Lax During the year 2000, the DAP provided hundreds of qualified low income clients with assistance in preparing voluntary chapter 7 petitions and free legal representation in non-dischargeability adversary proceedings. Project attorneys assisted 720 debtors in understanding their rights prior to reaffirmation agreement hearings.

Through the joint efforts of the Orange County Bar Association, the Orange County Bankruptcy Forum, the Orange County Public Law Center, and the Division's judges and clerks, a *pro bono* program was established in the Santa Ana Division in 1999. The program, which was patterned after a similar program established in the Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley divisions, was designed to help *pro se* debtors better understand their rights prior to reaffirmation agreement hearings. Each month, judges in the Santa Ana Division consolidate their reaffirmation agreement hearings into one calendar to afford volunteer attorneys an opportunity to provide counseling one hour before the hearings. The judges in the division hear these matters on a rotating basis from month to month. (See Table 1 below.)

Table 1 Central District of California - Bankruptcy Court Pro Bono Programs: 2000								
Division	Program		chargeability tance	Debtors Reaffirmation Agreement Assistance				
	Introduced	Offered	Provided	Offered	Provided			
Los Angeles	10/97	1,115		290				
San Fernando Valley	10/97	550	145	266	720*			
Santa Ana	11/99	N/A	N/A	139	97			
Northern	9/00	N/A	N/A	45	36			
Total		1,665	145	740	853*			

^{*}Includes both co-debtors if jointly filed.

Bankruptcy Mediation Program Assists the Court and Litigants

Recognizing that formal litigation of disputes in bankruptcy cases and adversary proceedings frequently impose significant economic burdens on parties and often delays resolution of those disputes, the Court established an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program in 1995 that is believed to be the largest of its type in the nation. Commonly known as the Bankruptcy Mediation Program, this program enables parties to resolve their disputes more quickly, at less cost, and without the stress and pressure associated with litigation.

As of December 31, 2000, 2,033 matters have been assigned to the Mediation Program since its introduction. Of the matters assigned, 1,906 matters were concluded while 127 remained pending. Of the 1,906 completed matters, 1,204 (63%) were settled and 702 (37%) were not settled. Matters not settled resume litigation and are decided by a bankruptcy judge. Below are some key statistics about the Mediation Program since its inception. (See Table 2 below.)

Table 2 Central District of California - Bankruptcy Court Mediation Program Statistics through December 31, 2000				
Total number matters assigned to ADR since July 1995	2,033			
Total number of matters concluded 1,204 matters settled (63%) 702 matters not settled (37%)	1,906			
Current number of pending matters	127			
Number of mediators	215			

A computer program developed in-house tracks all matters assigned to the Mediation Program, monitors the mediators' assignments and availability, and generates numerous types of statistical reports almost instantly by such categories as individual judge, division, chapter, matter description, and status of matter.

A comprehensive questionnaire enables the Court to determine the participants' perception of the Mediation Program. Data from these questionnaires are analyzed using a statistics computer program. Of the 4,984 questionnaires mailed to parties and attorneys who have attended mediation conferences, 1,820 completed questionnaires have been returned to the Court (representing a return rate of approximately 37% which is considered excellent in view of the fact that questionnaires are anonymous and voluntarily submitted). Data from the completed questionnaires are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3 Participant Satisfaction With Mediation Program as of December 31, 2000					
Respondents satisfied with the mediation process.	83%				
Respondents who would use the mediation program again.	93%				
Respondents who considered their settlement fair.	81%				
Respondents who believed parties will comply with settlement.	87%				
Respondents who believed mediator was effective in encouraging clients to engage in a meaningful negotiations.	84%				
Respondents who believed mediator was effective in getting the attorneys to engage in meaningful negotiations.	85%				

The Central District continues to benefit from the Mediation Program, enabling judges to focus on matters truly requiring judicial intervention. The Mediation Program also provides the judiciary with much-needed data demonstrating that mediation can resolve cases more quickly and at less cost while reducing the stress and pressure of litigation. The Mediation Program also provides a model for implementing other successful programs throughout the United States.

The following charts display the matters assigned to the Mediation Program by chapter, as well as the distribution of mediation matters within the various divisions of the Court (See Figures 1 and 2 below.)

Figure 1

Matters Assigned to Mediation Program by Chapter
(August 1995-December 2000)

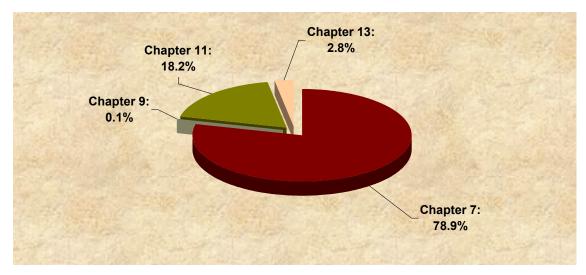
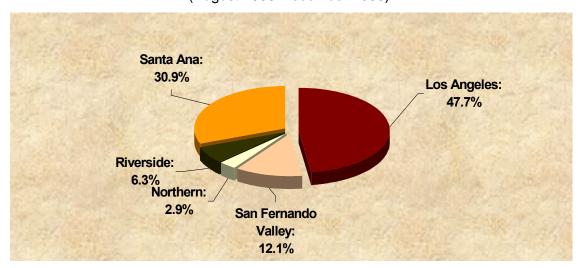


Figure 2

Distribution of Central District Mediation Matters
(August 1995-December 2000)



Online case file automation is integrated into the Court's existing case management system. High-speed imaging equipment is used to scan case documents, and barcoded cover sheets link each image to the appropriate online case file. During the year, this process was streamlined by the Clerk's Office through the introduction of enhanced case management software for several document types. (See article: Case Management Software Enhancements Introduced District-Wide, page 32.) Before being made available to the public, imaged documents are quality controlled for legibility and to ensure they are linked to the appropriate case and docket entry.

In addition to the bankruptcy case documents most requested by the public, the Court also images case documents in certain "high profile" cases. In 2000, complete online case files became available in the chapter 11 bankruptcy cases of Frederick's of Hollywood (LA00-29824ER), First Alliance Mortgage Company (SA00-12370LR), and Edwards Theatres Circuit, Inc. (SA00-16475LR).

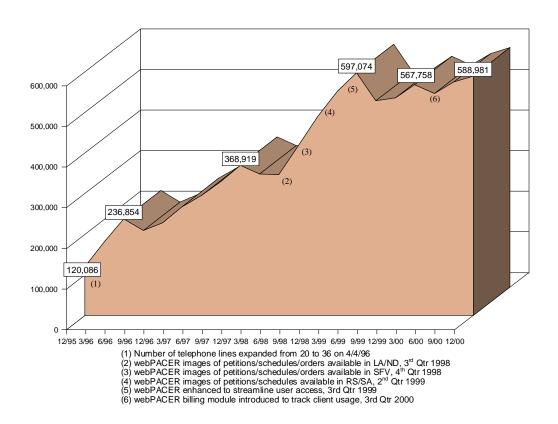
	Table 4 Online Case File Availability								
		First Fi	le Date of	Date of Imaged Documents					
Division	Petitions and Schedules	Amended Schedules	Ch 13 Plans	Ch 11 Plans	Signed Orders	Orders Closing Case	BNC Orders*		
Los Angeles	5/19/98	5/19/98	5/19/98	5/3/99	8/3/98	9/3/99	6/1/99		
Riverside	5/17/99	11/29/99	6/1/99	6/1/99	6/1/99	3/1/00	1/31/00		
Santa Ana	4/6/99	4/6/99	4/6/99	8/16/99	8/16/99	5/8/00	12/1/99		
Northern	4/17/98	9/1/98	4/17/98	5/3/99	9/10/98	5/1/00	9/10/98		
San Fernando Valley	10/1/98	11/4/99	10/1/98	5/3/99	11/2/98	11/27/00	1/11/99		

^{*}Includes discharge and dismissal orders generated by the Bankruptcy Noticing Center (BNC).

webPACER Usage Increases to Record Level

The Court's webPACER system provides the public with remote computer access to the Court's online case files 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Despite a 21% decline in bankruptcy filings in the year 2000, webPACER usage increased to a record 2,277,370 minutes during the year, a 3% increase over the 2,212,807 minutes reported in 1999. Strong webPACER usage indicates the continued growth of public acceptance of electronic access to online case files and contributed close to \$1.3 million in revenue for the federal judiciary. (See Figure 3 below.)

Figure 3
Central District of California - Bankruptcy Court
webPACER Usage in Minutes by Quarter: 1995-2000



webPACER Billing Enhancement Implemented District-Wide

Responding to requests by attorneys, the Clerk's Office modified webPACER to enable users to easily identify billable minutes for their clients. Using a comment field, the webPACER user can enter a client's name, account number, or other unique reference code that results in a summary for that client in the user's monthly webPACER billing. Before rollout for public use in September 2000, the modifications were fully tested in the Los Angeles Division.

Public Usage of the Voice Case Information System (VCIS) Remains Strong

The Voice Case Information System (VCIS) is an automated telephone system providing the public with basic bankruptcy case information through the use of a touch-tone telephone. This free service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and allows users to access case information such as case number, case filing date, chapter, status of case, and asset information. Although the estimated number of calls for this popular service decreased 7% from the record 580,800 calls in 1999 to 543,793 calls in 2000, the decline was far less than the 21% drop in bankruptcy filings. (See Table 5 below.)

Table 5 Estimated Voice Case Information System (VCIS) Usage: 1999-2000									
Division	Total Calls 1999	Total Calls 2000	Number Change	Percent Change					
Los Angeles	264,000	285,000	21,000	8%					
Riverside	108,000	91,000	-17,000	-16%					
Santa Ana	90,000	69,000	-21,000	-23%					
Northern	38,000	31,000	-7,000	-18%					
San Fernando Valley	85,000	68,000	-17,000	-20%					
District Total	585,000	544,000	-41,000	-7%					

Public Continues Appreciation of Customer Service

The Customer Service Questionnaire furnishes the Court with important feedback about the quality of customer service provided to the public. In addition to capturing traditional "satisfaction with service" information on a wide variety of variables, the questionnaire allows respondents to write in comments and suggestions. Customer Service Questionnaires are available at all divisions of the Court, as well as on the Court's web site.

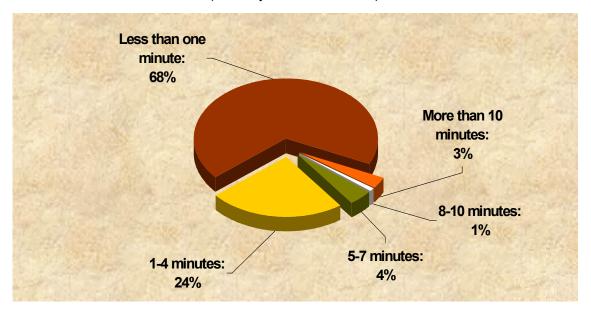
An analysis of the responses received from January through December 2000 reflects the following:

- Over 91% of the respondents rated the overall service of the Court as excellent.
- Nearly 94% of the respondents rated the employee who served them as excellent in the category of courtesy/attitude.
- More than 91% of the respondents rated the employee who served them as excellent in the category of *competent/helpful*.
- The convenience of the facility was rated as excellent by 75% of those responding, while facility appearance was rated as excellent by over 85% of the respondents.

Providing customers with fast service is an important goal of the Bankruptcy Court. In 2000, an impressive 68% of the respondents reported that they were served within one minute of their arrival, compared with 57% in 1999 and 45% in 1998. Moreover, less than 3% of the respondents reported waiting more than 10 minutes, compared with 5% in 1999 and 16% in 1998. The following chart illustrates the length of wait for service reported by respondents to the *Customer Service Questionnaire*.

Figure 4

Customer Service Questionnaire: Length of Wait
(January-December 2000)

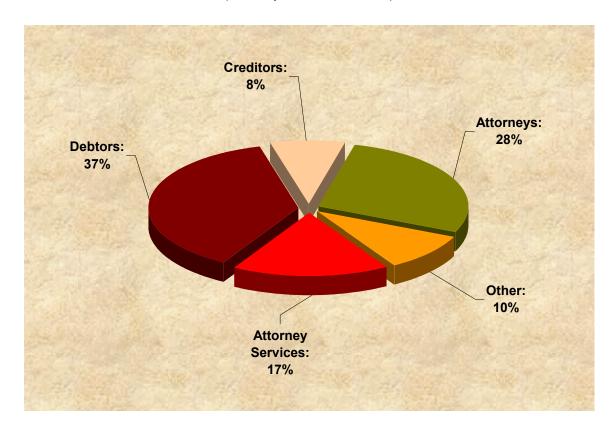


The following table and chart summarize the services used by *Customer Service Questionnaire* respondents and the types of customers who responded:

Table 6 Customer Service Questionnaire: Services Used (Multiple responses possible)					
Intake/Filing Counter	66.6%				
Records	17.4%				
Public Information Office	7.2%				
Case Administration	2.9%				
Other	5.7%				

Figure 5

Customer Service Questionnaire: Who Responded (January-December 2000)



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Drop Box Filing Provides Customer Service Enhancement

The Court provides customers with the added convenience of filing documents outside of normal business hours by making drop boxes available in the Los Angeles, Santa Ana, and San Fernando Valley divisions from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. In 2000, the Riverside Division expanded its drop box hours to make this option available to filers from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (The Northern Division does not offer a drop box.) Drop boxes also can be used by the public during business hours to avoid having to wait in line. Documents placed in the drop box receive a "filed" stamp reflecting the date it was deposited in the drop box. Since documents from the drop box can be processed outside of the busiest office hours, this service also helps the Court better handle its workload. In 2000, an estimated 251,658 documents were filed using drop boxes in the four participating divisions, approximately 8% of all documents filed with the Court. (See Table 7 below.)

Table 7 Estimated Number of Bankruptcy Pleadings Left In Self-Service Drop Boxes: 2000								
Division Los Angeles Riverside Santa Ana Fernando Valley District*								
Documents With Fees	9,883	5,215	3,218	4,095	22,411			
Documents Without Fees	116,025	45,711	38,611	28,900	229,247			
TOTAL	125,908	50,926	41,829	32,995	251,658			

^{*}The Northern Division does not have a drop box.

QUALITY ASSURANCE/TRAINING

Automated Quality Control Program Introduced

Developed by the Clerk's Office and piloted in the Los Angeles Division, an automated program for the quality control of new petition data was introduced to all divisions. The program standardizes and streamlines the manual quality control process previously in place in each division. Using Visual FoxPro, the new program features user-friendly screens that closely mirror the layout of the bankruptcy petition. In addition to standardizing the quality control process, the new automated program features reporting capabilities that improve the collection and analysis of data, enabling corrective actions to be taken much more quickly. Automated reports help identify training needs and other important trends. Development of a similar automated quality control program for adversary proceedings is currently underway.

Bankruptcy Court Tracks District-Wide Data Entry Errors

While the automated quality control program was under development, the Clerk's Office began tracking errors in the entry of data regarding new bankruptcy petitions in January 2000. After a new petition has been filed and the data has been entered into the Court's cashiering system, a quality control of all new petitions is performed. At that time, all errors are corrected prior to the downloading of new petition data into the Court's case management system. The error rate for new petitions with data entry errors declined by 37% from the 6.7% error rate reported in January 2000 to the 4.2% error rate in January 2001. By tracking data entry errors, the Court can easily identify quality control issues and trends that can be addressed through focused training. During 2000, the Court also automated the process of gathering data entry error rates. (See previous article.)

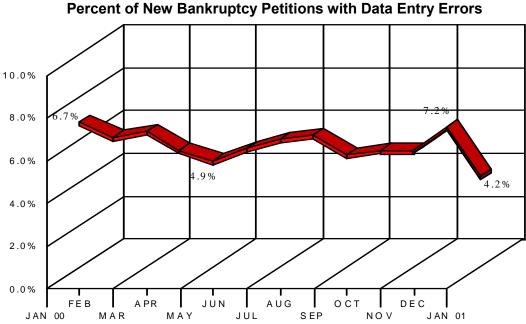


Figure 6
United States Bankruptcy Court - Central District of California
Percent of New Bankruptcy Petitions with Data Entry Errors

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Lunch and Learn Program a Continued Success

Established in October 1999, the Los Angeles Division's "Lunch and Learn" program consistently attracts large audiences from the Clerk's Office. Through this program, participating Los Angeles Division judges provide presentations to Clerk's Office staff on topics designed to increase their awareness and understanding of the bankruptcy process. As indicated by the title, the sessions occur during the lunch hour to minimize the impact on operations. Attendance is voluntary. In a first for the program, a presentation by the Honorable Erithe A. Smith entitled *Chapters 7, 11, and 13 as They Relate to Bankruptcy Cases* was videotaped for future viewing by staff in outlying divisions.

	Table 8 Lunch and Learn Program: 2000					
Presenter	Bankruptcy-Related Topic					
Judge Donovan	Significance of writing opinions once a decision is reached in court.					
Judge March	Bankruptcy crimes and the roles of federal agencies that investigate and prosecute the parties.					
Judge Robles	Interaction of the Bankruptcy Court and the Office of the United States Trustee, as well as the history and organizational structure.					
Judge Russell	Participation of the Central District of California Bankruptcy Court in the Bankruptcy Appellate Panel and pertinent information related to the Panel.					
Judge Smith	Chapters 7, 11, and 13 as They Relate to Bankruptcy Cases.					
Judge Zurzolo	General appeals issues and questions.					

Clerk's Office Participates in Premiere Video Conference Workshop

In March 2000, the Court participated in the Federal Judicial Center's first video conference workshop, *Developing Task-Oriented Documentation*. Staff from all five divisions joined nine other federal court sites throughout the nation by video conference. A high level of interaction between the instructor and participating sites was facilitated by a document camera that enabled participants to review each other's documentation on a "real time" basis.

Court Shares Resources with U.S. Probation Office

During this period, the United States Probation Office participated with Court staff in two Federal Judicial Television Network workshops presented in the Court's training classroom. The workshops - Structured On-the-Job Training and Developing Court Employee Competencies - utilized "push-to-talk" technology, which allows audience members to ask questions of the trainer at the point of broadcast and to share information with federal agencies throughout the nation.

Table 9 **District-Wide Training: 2000**

Classes	Staff Participant Hours						
Name Quantity			Total LA RS SA NE				
Name	Quantity	Hours	LA	K3	SA	ND	SFV
AUTOMATION TRAINING		riours					
Abra	2	49	14	7	7	14	7
Bankruptcy Online System	1	20	20	/	/	14	-
Fas _a t Overview	12	244	244	-	-		
Informix	2	104	104		-		
	2	-	104	<u> </u>	-	- 11	1.1
Intellitrak		28	-	-	- 40	14	14
JOGS	3	25	9	-	16	-	-
Microsoft TCP/IP; Windows NT; Internet Info Server	4	160	-	-	-	-	160
Miscellaneous Topics	7	18	14	2	2	-	-
NETWARE/NOVELL	7	400	120	80	80	40	80
Object Oriented Programming	1 52	6 125	6 7	24	- 58	<u>-</u> 14	22
Visual RMS WordPerfect 8	39	206	166	24	- 56	4	12
					_	·	
TOTAL Automation Training	132	1,385	704	137	163	86	295
FJC/AO-SPONSORED PROGRAMS AND FJTN PRESENTATIONS							
Adaptive Manager	2	176	96	14	42	-	24
CM/ECF	1	12	11	_	-	_	1
Court Employee Competencies	1	58	44	_	10	_	4
Dealing With Difficult People	3	129	92	-	23	-	14
Memory Skills	2	66	66	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Topics	22	116	44	12	12	2	46
Overcoming Overload	1	40	34	_	-	_	6
Peer Coaching	1	270	-	_	270	_	-
Structured On-the-Job	3	174	130	-	44	-	-
Supervisors Development	2	29	18	2	5	2	2
Task-Oriented Documentation	3	232	118	50	28	18	18
Teamwork Essentials	2	60	40	-	16	4	-
Working Modules	3	28	-	-	28	-	-
TOTAL FJC/AO/FJTN Programs	46	1,390	693	78	478	26	115
OTHER TRAINING							
Counterfeit Currency Training	2	23	-	-	-	9	14
Disaster Preparedness	6	101	10	46	17	-	28
Domestic & Workplace Violence Connection	1	65	30	10	10	5	10
Extern/Law Clerk Training	3	408	312	30	24	-	42
Hire the Right Person	1	78	36	6	6	12	18
Human Resource and Employee Information	40	1,080	580	281	44	57	118
Lunch and Learn	31	399	223	163	-	13	-
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator	1	133	84	28	-	-	21
Prevention of Workplace Violence	1	105	72	11	11	-	11
Professional Development	22	787	551	62	39	16	119
Refresher Procurement Training	1	23	23	-	-	-	-
The Public: How Do We Deal With Them?	1	58	58	-	-	-	-
Train the Trainer	1	640	350	80	105	35	70
Workers' Compensation	6	43	14	12	7	3	7
Working Together	11	463	282	-	66	25	90
Writing Skills	3	60	40	20	-	-	-
TOTAL Other Training	131	4,466	2,665	749	329	175	548
<u> </u>	309	7,241	4,062	964	970		

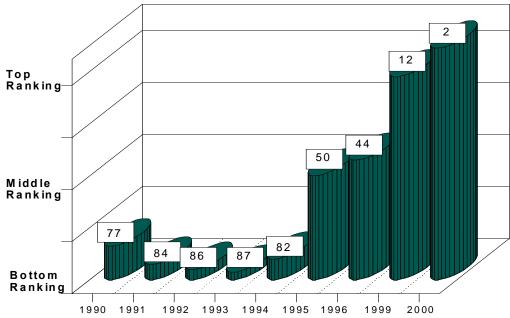
CASE ADMINISTRATION

Bankruptcy Court Achieves Extraordinary Improvement in Case Management

Based on an analysis of the *Bankruptcy Program Indicators*, a series of statistical and case processing measures published by the Administrative Office on a quarterly basis, the Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California has become one of the most efficient bankruptcy courts in the nation. Although the Administrative Office no longer ranks districts, the Court's case processing performance can be inferred from the most recently released report (for the 12-month period ending December 31, 2000). Based on the 16 case processing factors measured by the *Indicators*, the Court would rank second out of the 90 bankruptcy court districts in the nation. When compared to other large bankruptcy court districts receiving over 20,000 filings per year, the Court would achieve the highest overall ranking. This performance represents an extraordinary improvement when compared to the bottom 10% ranking held by the Court from 1991 through 1994. (See Figure 7 below.)

In addition to providing comparisons with other bankruptcy courts throughout the nation, the *Bankruptcy Program Indicators* are also utilized by the Court to track its case management performance. (See Table 10 next page.) From December 1999 to December 2000, the Court improved or maintained its performance in nine out of the 11 case processing categories measured by the *Bankruptcy Program Indicators*. Further, the Court exceeds the national average in 15 out of 16 measures and is in the top 10% in eight of the 16 measures. Surpassing the most optimistic projections made just a few years ago, the Court achieved this phenomenal success through effective goal setting, streamlined operations, and the integration of well-designed automation enhancements.

Figure 7
United States Bankruptcy Court - Central District of California
Case Processing Ranking Out of 90 Districts: 1990-2000*



*No rankings done for 1997 and 1998.

2000 Annual Report

Table 10
Bankruptcy Program Indicators
12 Months Ending December 31, 2000

Chantar 7 Casas	National	Central District of California			
Chapter 7 Cases	Average	2000	1999	1998	1997
Median Disposition Time	4.0 mos	3.6 mos	3.6 mos	3.9 mos	4.3 mos
% Open After 6 Months	15.1%	4.9%	5.4%	7.8%	10.7%
% Open After 12 Months	7.1%	1.7%	1.7%	2.3%	4.3%
% Open After 36 Months	1.4%	0.4%	0.6%	1.0%	1.1%
Average Age of Pending Cases	10.1 mos	5.3 mos			
Chapter 13 Cases					
Median Disposition Time	36.6 mos	10.9 mos	13.5 mos	15.9 mos	16.0 mos
% Open After 6 Months	89.1%	62.4%	65.6%	81.8%	75.0%
% Open After 36 Months	40.6%	11.6%	14.6%	17.0%	20.6%
% Open After 72 Months	2.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.4%
Average Age of Pending Cases	23.7 mos	18.5 mos			
Chapter 11 Cases					
% Open After 48 Months	17.9%	13.2%	16.6%	14.8%	16.4%
Average Age of Pending Cases	44.0 mos	40.6 mos			
Adversary Proceedings					
Dischargeability (11 U.S.C. § 523) Median Disposition Time	6.2 mos	5.1 mos	5.6 mos	6.0 mos	6.7 mos
Average Age of Pending Cases	19.0 mos	9.0 mos			
Other than Dischargeability Median Disposition Time	6.7 mos	7.8 mos	7.2 mos	8.2 mos	8.5 mos
Average Age of Pending Cases	33.7 mos	14.2 mos			

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Pending Caseload Reduced to Lowest Level Since 1983

During 2000, the Bankruptcy Court's pending caseload was reduced to its lowest level since 1983. As of December 31, 2000, a total of 43,517 bankruptcy cases were pending, a 16% decrease from the 51,741 cases pending at the end of 1999 and a 58% decrease from the record 103,207 cases pending in August 1992, the highest level in the Court's history. Continued development of case management tools and case closing automation by the Court, in addition to the setting of meaningful case closing goals, have been instrumental in achieving this reduction. (See Figure 8 next page.)

Not only has the number of pending cases dropped, but the age of the pending caseload has improved. Since 1995 (the first year for which information is available), the Court has made significant reductions in the percentage of older cases that remain pending. (See Table 11 below.)

Table 11
Central District of California - United States Bankruptcy Court
Analysis of Pending Case Aging: 1995 vs. 2000

	Pending Case Aging Category	12/31/95	12/31/00	Percent Change
	Percent 4 Months or Less	56.4%	78.5%	39.2%
Chapter 7	Percent over 6 Years	4.7%	1.6%	66.0%
Chapter 11	Percent over 6 Years	18.5%	10.2%	44.9%
	Percent 3 Years or Less	82.2%	83.8%	1.9%
Chapter 13	Percent over 5 Years	5.0%	1.0%	80.0%
Adversary	Percent 1 Year or Less	64.2%	67.2%	5.0%
Proceedings	Percent over 3 Years	13.9%	7.7%	44.6%

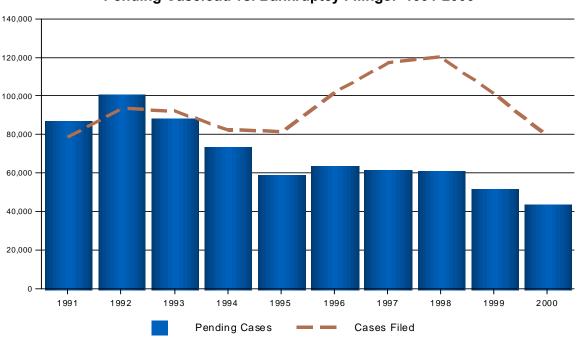


Figure 8
Central District of California - United States Bankruptcy Court
Pending Caseload vs. Bankruptcy Filings: 1991-2000

Electronic Images of Bankruptcy-Related Orders Now E-Mailed from District Court

In June 2000, the District Court began routing electronic images of dispositive orders entered in bankruptcy appeals to the Los Angeles Division by e-mail for distribution throughout the Court. Upon receipt, the Clerk's Office immediately forwards the electronic images by e-mail to the appropriate judge and designated staff. The new electronic routing method substantially reduces the delivery time of the orders that are routed to the Bankruptcy Court and enables the simultaneous review of the orders by judicial and Clerk's Office staff. In addition, the electronic routing is a more reliable delivery method than inter-office mail. In the first six months, 30 orders were forwarded through this electronic routing method.

Facilitated by Automation, Court Balances Caseload Upon Judge Fenning's Departure

Following the resignation of the Honorable Lisa Hill Fenning (see page 8), the Clerk's Office reassigned her pending cases and revised the case assignment wheels in the Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley divisions to balance the caseload. A program developed by the Clerk's Office reassigned all pending matters in a timely manner among eight judges. Reports were created to identify case reassignment exceptions so that discrepancies could be quickly resolved. Upon Judge Fenning's departure, the automated program created an entry reassigning the case to the new judge, linked an image of the reassignment order to the appropriate docket entry, and updated the judge assignment in both the Court's case management system (NIBS) and at the Administrative Office. Through effective analysis and planning, this project was successfully executed by May 1, 2000, the day after Judge Fenning's departure.

Docketing Performance Continues to Excel/Imaging Standards Introduced

To ensure efficient case processing, the Clerk's Office tracks the time it takes to enter a document on the bankruptcy case or adversary proceeding docket from the day it is filed with the Court. The Time-to-Docket goals are comprised of a series of targets that measure the number of days it takes to docket orders and other items. These goals generate a great deal of friendly competition among the five divisons. During 2000, the Clerk's Office docketed a remarkable 91% of the 3,073,243 documents filed with the Court within one day of filing (excluding automated entries), a continuation of the excellent docketing performance achieved in 1999. (See Figure 9 next page.)

Recognizing the value of timely access to online case file documents, the Clerk's Office added Time-to-Image performance categories to the Time-to-Docket performance measures in May 2000. The new combined measures, known as T.I.D.E. (Time-to-Image/Docket Excellence), track the time it takes for a document to be imaged from the date it was entered on the case docket. Since the introduction of the Time-to-Image performance category, nearly 90% of all items were imaged within one day of docketing. (See Figure 10 next page.)

Records Archived

The Central District of California sent 259,564 closed bankruptcy case files and 14,234 closed adversary proceeding to the National Archives and Records Administration for archiving in 2000. As such, the Court's archiving efforts greatly exceeded the 90,948 bankruptcy case files and 5,204 adversary proceeding files that were archived in 1999. The extraordinary increase in the number of files archived during 2000 resulted from efforts by the Los Angeles Division to safeguard Court records in advance of the Democratic National Convention. (See related article, Court Demonstrates Ability to Manage Offsite Operations During the Democratic National Convention, page 23.) The total number of records archived by the Los Angeles Division in 2000 was more than twice the number of records archived by the entire district in 1999. The following table outlines the archiving activity that occurred in each division during 2000.

Table 12

Records Sent to the National Archives and Records Administration in 2000

	Los Angeles	Riverside	Santa Ana	Northern	San Fernando Valley	Total
Bankruptcy Cases	186,681	25,615	15,103	5,924	26,241	259,564
Adversary Proceedings	10,196	846	1,101	433	1,658	14,234

Figure 9
Central District of California - United States Bankruptcy Court
% of All Items Docketed Within One Day of Filing:
July 1998 through December 2000

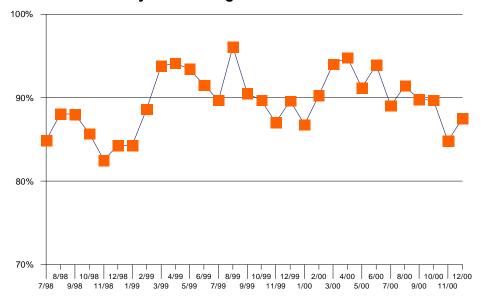
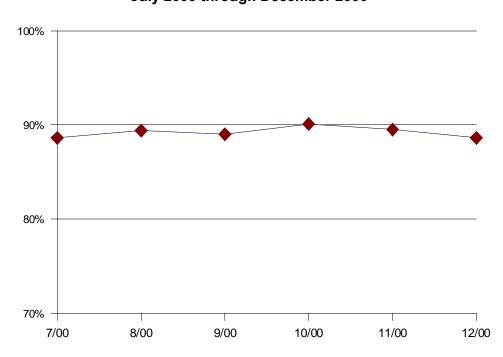


Figure 10
Central District of California - United States Bankruptcy Court
% of All Items *Imaged* Within One Day of Docketing:
July 2000 through December 2000



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Court Employees Increase Charitable Contributions

In 2000, Court employees contributed \$46,555 to a variety of charities through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), representing a 1.6% increase over the \$45,805 contributed in 1999. Established in 1961, the CFC is the only authorized charitable campaign in the federal government workplace. Through the CFC, Court employees contribute money to hundreds of different non-profit organizations. In addition to monetary support, the Court assisted local CFC efforts by providing a "loaned executive." The loaned executive coordinated efforts between CFC workers at 36 different government agencies, helping them to determine and achieve contribution goals.

Table 13 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC): 1999-2000								
Division	sion 1999 2000 Percent 1999 2000 Percent Dollars Change Donors Donors Change							
Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley	\$32,520	\$33,654	3.5%	202	210	4.0%		
Riverside	5,238	5,933	13.3%	32	41	28.1%		
Santa Ana	7,450	6,212	-16.6%	37	26	-29.7%		
Northern	597	756	26.6%	14	13	-7.1%		
TOTAL	\$45,805	\$46,555	1.6%	285	290	1.8%		

Court Continues Support for Summer Youth Programs

As in past years, the Court hosted a number of high school student workers through various summer youth programs in local communities. These programs enable the Court to help young adults develop general office skills and a professional work ethic. Through the Summer Youth Employment Training Program, four high school students assisted the Santa Ana Division. The San Fernando Valley Division hosted three high school students through two programs - one sponsored by the One-Stop Workforce and Industry Center and the other by the Los Angeles Unified School District. The Northern Division also hosted a local high school student from the program sponsored by the Santa Barbara County Education Office.

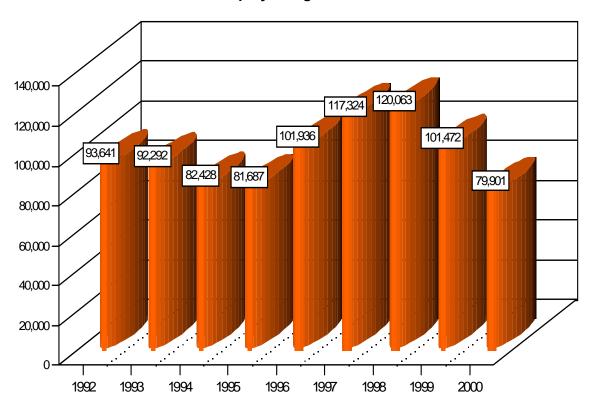
COURT STATISTICS

Decline In Bankruptcy Case and Adversary Proceeding Filings Continues

Mirroring a national trend of declining bankruptcy filings, a total of 79,901 bankruptcy cases were filed in the Central District of California during 2000. This represents a 21.3% decrease from the 101,472 cases filed in 1999 and a 33.5% decrease from the record 120,063 cases filed in 1998. During 2000, bankruptcy case filings declined in all five divisions of the Court and in every chapter of bankruptcy, except chapter 11. During the year, chapter 7 filings declined by 22.4%, chapter 13 filings declined by 17.5%, while chapter 11 filings increased by 22.6%. (See Exhibit 9.) The increase in chapter 11 filings in 2000 resulted from the number of large cases filed with multiple related entities, each of which filed a separate bankruptcy case. In the year 2000, 20 chapter 11 cases with an additional 161 related cases were filed, compared to 1999 when 21 chapter 11 cases were filed with only 41 related cases. Filings of adversary proceedings in 2000 decreased by 15.8% from the prior year. (See Exhibit 15.)

The following graph illustrates bankruptcy case filing statistics from 1992 through 2000.

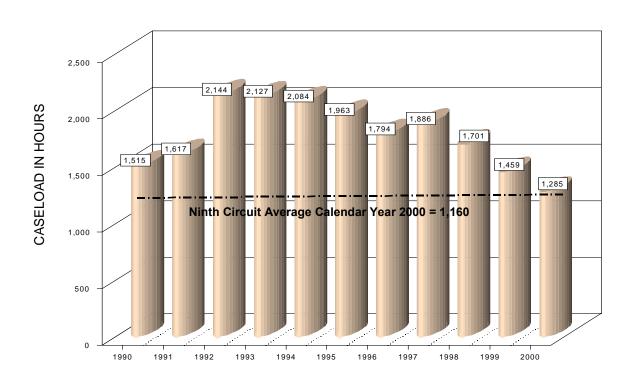
Figure 11
Central District of California - Bankruptcy Court
Bankruptcy Filings: 1992-2000



Judge Weighted Caseload Remains Above Ninth Circuit Average

In March 1991, the Judicial Conference approved the bankruptcy case weights developed in the *Bankruptcy Judge Time Study* by the Federal Judicial Center. Initially established primarily for evaluating requests for additional judgeships, the weights also provide useful information about judicial workloads and facilitate judicial workload comparisons with other bankruptcy courts. For the 12 months ending December 2000, the average weighted caseload per Central District bankruptcy judge was 1,285 caseload hours, or 10.8% more than the 1,160 hour Ninth Circuit average. (See Figure 12 below.)

Figure 12
Central District of California - United States Bankruptcy Court
Annualized Weighted Caseload per Judgeship: 1990-2000



Bankruptcy Case and Adversary Proceeding Closings

During 2000, the Court closed 88,971 bankruptcy cases, outpacing the 79,901 cases filed during the year by 11.4% (9,070 cases). A total of 5,273 adversary proceedings were closed during 2000, or 613 more than the 4,660 adversary proceedings filed during the year. To help manage the closing effort throughout the year, the district established closing goals for various types of bankruptcy cases and adversary proceedings.

Figure 13
Central District of California - Bankruptcy Court
Bankruptcy Cases Closed vs. Filings: 1991-2000

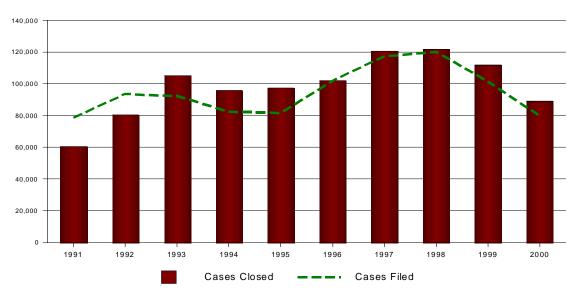
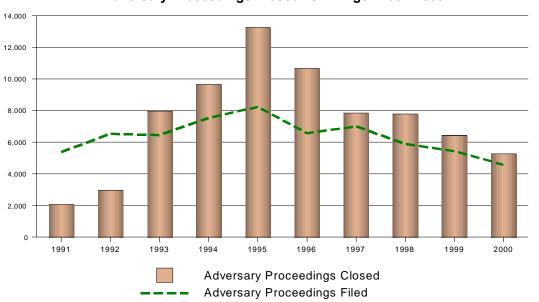


Figure 14
Central District of California - Bankruptcy Court
Adversary Proceedings Closed vs. Filings: 1991-2000



Number of Relief From Automatic Stay Motions Decrease

The number of relief from the automatic stay motions filed in the Central District continued the decrease of recent years. In calendar year 2000, a total of 17,940 motions were filed in the district, representing a decrease of 29.5% from the 25,430 motions filed in 1999. This decline can be attributed to the prompt dismissal of incomplete petitions before creditors can file a motion for relief from stay; the enforcement by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department of C.C.P. 715.050, which allows an eviction to proceed without an order lifting the automatic stay when the debtor has filed a bankruptcy subsequent to the notice of eviction; and also to the decrease in the number of cases filed in 2000.

2000 Unlawful Detainer and Mill Case Incidence Study

Sample data collected from the case files for petitions filed in April of 2000 indicated an overall upturn in the number of petitions filed to stop/delay eviction in the district. The 1999 findings indicated that 5.4% of the petitions filed involved an unlawful detainer, while in 2000 the percentage of petitions with unlawful detainer actions increased to 8.5%. (See Table 14 below) However, analysis of the data indicated that in 83% of these petitions, the debtor had representation.

Bankruptcy mill involvement in filing bankruptcy petitions was determined to be very low. (A bankruptcy mill is a non-attorney who prepares frequently misleading and sometimes fraudulent petitions. The debtors for whom they prepare petitions are often misled with respect to the facts and repercussions of filing for bankruptcy.) Based on the cases sampled, only 0.3% of bankruptcy petitions filed were prepared by mills.

Table 14 PERCENT OF BANKRUPTCY CASES THAT ARE UNLAWFUL DETAINER FILINGS: 1991-2000								
Year	Los Angeles (inc. ND/SFV)	Los Angeles	San Fernando Valley (SFV)	Northern (ND)	Santa Ana	Riverside	District Total	
1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000	22.4% 12.9% 11.9% 13.3% 3.2% 10.9% 10.4% 9.0% 6.6% 4.8%	12.8% 14.5% 3.5% 11.2% 10.2% 10.2% 6.8% 3.4%	* 12.4% 4.2% 12.7% 12.8% 7.4% 6.8% 7.6%	* 1.3% 7.0% 0.2% 3.5% 5.4% 3.3% 3.5% 9.8%	10.9% 9.4% 3.2% 4.0% 1.4% 2.2% 6.9% 3.8% 4.6% 8.3%	2.6% 6.4% 1.2% 2.3% 3.6% 7.3% 1.2% 3.7% 2.4% 11.9%	16.9% 11.0% 8.3% 9.5% 3.0% 8.8% 8.0% 7.1% 5.4% 8.5%	

^{*}Included in the Los Angeles Division numbers.

Although the number of unlawful detainer petitions has increased, the increase occurred in petitions not prepared by the mills. Only 4.5% of the unlawful detainer petitions in the study sample were prepared by mills, compared to 27% in 1999.

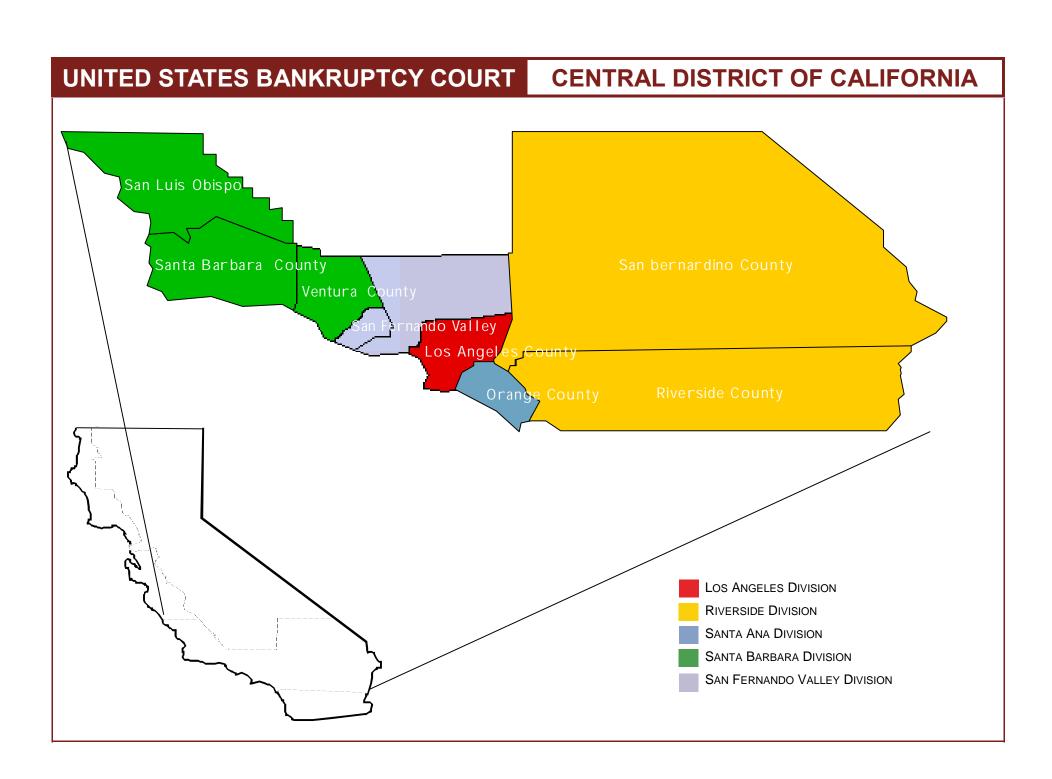
	Table 15 PROJECTED ANNUAL UNLAWFUL DETAINER FILINGS: 1991-2000								
Year	Los Angeles (inc. ND/SFV)	Los Angeles	San Fernando Valley (SFV)	Northern (ND)	Santa Ana	Riverside	District Total		
1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000	11,152 7,602 6,860 6,604 1,607 6,907 7,639 6,877 4,383 2,439	6,804 4,931 1,167 4,792 5,022 5,355 3,204 1,223	* 1,292 429 1,926 2,265 1,321 1,014 881	* 56 381 11 189 352 201 165 362	1,298 1,307 436 512 182 337 1,408 659 584 813	382 1,170 225 390 656 1,621 271 949 518 2,244	12,832 10,079 7,521 7,506 2,445 8,865 9,318 8,485 5,485 5,523		

^{*}Included in the Los Angeles Division numbers.

Pro Se Filings

From 1994 through 2000, the number of chapter 7 and 13 cases filed *pro se* (filed by an individual not represented by an attorney) averaged about 34%, one of the highest rates in the country. The following table shows the estimated number of *pro se* filings from 1994 through 2000. As can be seen in the table, the percentage of pro se filings has declined since 1994. It is believed that this trend results in part from enforcement of C.C.P. 715.050 by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, which reduces the benefits of the automatic stay (see article: *Number of Relief from Automatic Stay Motions Decrease*, page 50). The number of *pro se* filings is significant because it adversely impacts the judicial and Clerk's Office workloads in the Court.

Table 16 Central District of California - Bankruptcy Court Estimated Percentage of <i>Pro Se</i> Filings District-Wide: 1994-2000								
Year	Chapter 7	Chapter 7 Chapter 13 Total						
1994	40%	44%	42%					
1995	36%	35%	36%					
1996	35%	38%	36%					
1997	37%	37%	37%					
1998	32%	32%	32%					
1999	33%	29%	31%					
2000	27%	19%	24%					
Average	35%	33%	34%					



POPULATION SERVED

With a population of more than 17 million people, the Central District represents approximately 58% of California's population of nearly 34 million people. Based on the 2000 census, the Central District of California is home to four of the five most populous counties in California (Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside) and two of the five most populous counties in the United States (Los Angeles and Orange).

The following table details changes in population for the Central District of California from 1990 to 2000 compared to the number of bankruptcy cases filed in 1990 and 2000.

Table 17

Change in Population and Bankruptcy Filings: 1990 vs. 2000

CENTRAL DISTRICT OF	POPULATION*			BANI	NKRUPTCY FILINGS		
CALIFORNIA COUNTIES	1990	2000	% Chg	1990	2000	% Chg	
Los Angeles	8,863,164	9,519,338	7.4%				
Ventura	669,016	753,197	12.6%			32.6%	
Santa Barbara	369,608	399,347	8.0%	38,74	51,391		
San Luis Obispo	217,162	246,681	13.6%				
Orange	2,410,556	2,846,289	18.1%	9,34	9,715	4.0%	
Riverside	1,170,413	1,545,387	32.0%	11,04	5 18,795	70.2%	
San Bernardino	1,418,380	1,709,434	20.5%	11,04	10,795	10.2/0	
District Total	15,118,299	17,019,673	12.6%	59,12	79,901	35.1%	

^{*}Source: United States Census Bureau, April 2000 Census (Internet release date April 2, 2001)

Personnel

A total of 472 full-time equivalent employees (including judges, judges' staff, and the Clerk's Office) were on the payroll of the Bankruptcy Court in the Central District of California as of December 31, 2000.

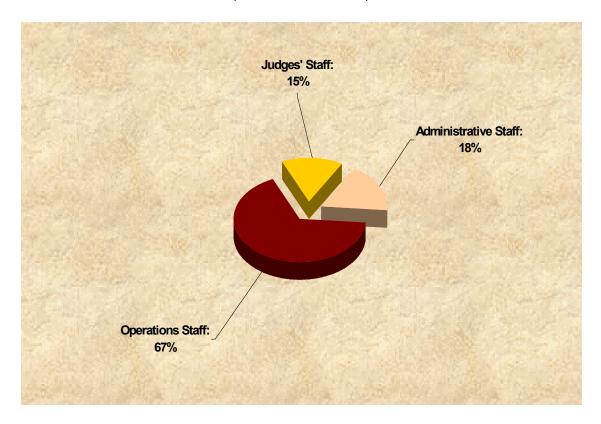
The following chart displays the allocation of Central District personnel. The majority of staff work in Clerk's Office operations (67%). Operations includes the staff of the Case Initiation, Courtroom Services, and Analysis & Information departments. Another 18% of the Court's personnel consists of administrative staff, which includes the Executive Office, Court Resources, Financial Services, Information Technology, Office Services, and Space Planning. The judges' staffs, including law clerks and judicial assistants, comprise 15% of the total.

The majority of employees work in Los Angeles (55%), followed by Riverside (16%), Santa Ana (14%), the San Fernando Valley (11%), and the Northern Division (4%).

Figure 15
Central District of California - Bankruptcy Court

Personnel

(December 31, 2000)



OPERATING BUDGET

In 1994, the Judicial Conference approved the expansion of budget decentralization to all federal courts. In accordance with the budget decentralization policy, the Court adopted the Appropriated Funds Financial Management Plan. This plan delineates the roles and responsibilities for the receipt, budgeting, and disbursement of funds provided to the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California by the United States Congress, via the Judicial Conference and the Administrative Office of the United States Courts (AO).

Each year the AO provides the Court with budget allotments in three general accounts: salary, operating expense, and automation. The budget allotments are determined by formulas that are based upon variables such as the number of bankruptcy filings, current authorized judgeships, judicial staffing, and Clerk's Office staffing levels.

At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Court develops a spending plan to implement its operating objectives. The plan is an extensive breakdown of the Court's operations by project and cost account, including the status of expenditures to date and sources of potential additional funding. This internal budget tool allows the Court to prioritize projects and monitor expenditures.

In fiscal year 2001 (FY01), October 1, 2000 through September 30, 2001, the Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California was allocated a budget of \$22,237,577. Although FY01 funding was only \$111,290 less than FY00 funding, it was \$1,311,152 (7%) less than necessary to maintain 1999 service levels. The funding difference results from cost of living increases and within grade promotions which needed to be accommodated in the FY01 budget. Furthermore, this shortfall necessitated staff reductions.

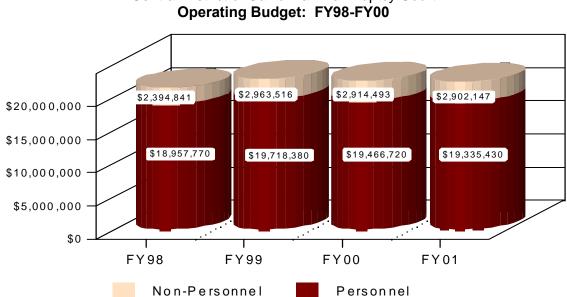


Figure 16
Central District of California - Bankruptcy Court
Operating Budget: FY98-FY00

RECEIPTS

In fiscal year 2000 (FY00), the Court collected \$22,343,390 in fees, compared to \$25,741,401 collected in FY99 and \$27,429,315 collected in FY98. The Court collects fees in 13 fund areas including: filing fees; bankruptcy noticing fees; unclaimed funds fees; copying fees; and fees for other services rendered. The 13.2% decrease in fees collected during FY00 from the prior fiscal year can be attributed to the reduction in the number of bankruptcy filings. The following table compares the money collected in the seven largest funds between FY98 through FY00.

Table 18 Monies Collected in the Seven Largest Funds FY98-FY00							
FUND NAME	FY98	FY99	FY00	% Change FY00 vs. FY99			
Funds Associated with Filing Fees:							
Filing Fees (086900, 086901)	\$3,771,453	\$3,509,902	\$2,948,299	-16.0%			
Fees for Bankruptcy Notices (092037)	\$3,579,561	\$3,205,075	\$2,543,023	-20.7%			
Fees for Bankruptcy Oversight (507311 and 5073XX)	\$3,858,295	\$3,437,714	\$3,546,295	3.2%			
Bankruptcy Escrow Account (6855TT)	\$6,071,312	\$5,380,150	\$4,174,217	-22.4%			
Fees for Judicial Services (510000, 510001)	\$7,382,941	\$6,612,692	\$5,899,472	-10.8%			
Payment of Unclaimed Monies (6047BK)	\$2,054,518	\$3,254,480	\$2,932,277	-9.9%			
Remaining Funds	\$711,235	\$341,388	\$299,807	-12.2%			
TOTAL	\$27,429,315	\$25,741,401	\$22,343,390	-13.2%			

SPACE & FACILITIES

The Bankruptcy Court rents approximately 459,064 square feet of space from the General Services Administration (GSA). (GSA is the landlord for all government owned and leased space.) GSA's responsibilities include rent negotiations, lease awards, tenant improvements and alterations, and daily maintenance. The graphs below delineate the square footage of space rented for each division and the percentage of space district-wide used for courtrooms, judges' chambers, office space, conference and training rooms, and miscellaneous space (which includes restrooms, hallways, and storage space).

Figure 17

Square Footage By Division

Central District of California - Bankruptcy Court (2000)

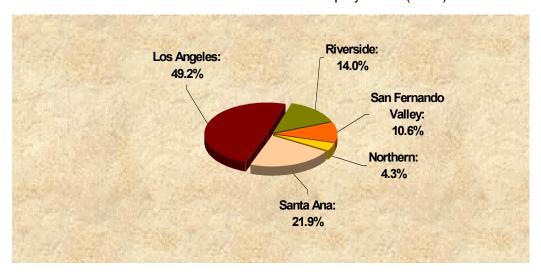
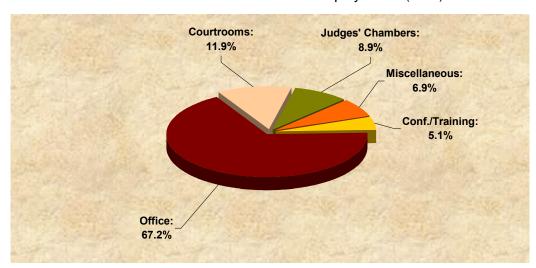


Figure 18

Facilities Make-up

Central District of California - Bankruptcy Court (2000)



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